

# Scorpions

By

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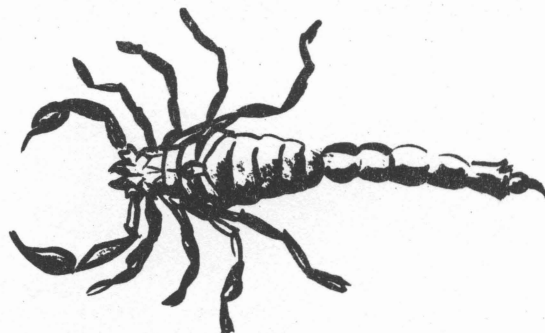
## Life History and Habits

Scorpions have a long, segmented tail-like abdomen ending in a bulbous sac and stinging organ. A front pair of appendages, known as 'pedipalps,' are enlarged and equipped at the terminal end with pincers much like those of the crab or crayfish. They have four pairs of legs.

Depressed or flattened bodies enable scorpions to enter homes from outdoors through any crevices as small as one-sixteenth to one-eighth inch wide. Entrances are made through cracks, under doors, around windows, eaves, and especially through holes in floors and walls for water pipes or other fixtures. In the home, scorpions are often seen in the bathroom as they seem to be attracted by the moisture and cool porcelain fixtures. Brick and stone homes are usually more attractive to scorpions than those of wood construction.

Little is known concerning the biology of scorpions. The common striped species gives birth to 30 to 40 young in June and July. The young attach themselves to the back of the mother to prevent being devoured by her. They leave the female's back in 10 to 14 days and thereafter remain out of reach of the mother to prevent being eaten.

Scorpions feed primarily upon insects and spiders which they grasp with their pincers and sting. In the latter operation, the sting is thrust forward over the scorpion's back and plunged into the victim to paralyze it. The same procedure is used to sting man.



None of the species of scorpions occurring in Texas is considered to be dangerously poisonous. Severe pain and slight systemic disorders may occur when the sting is inflicted. Treating with weak ammonia usually gives prompt relief.

## Control

The first step toward getting rid of scorpions is to clean up the premises. Scorpions thrive in accumulations of old lumber, boxes, rags, brush, bricks, etc. The older these accumulations, the better for the scorpions.

A five per cent DDT household spray applied to the surface of the area where scorpions inhabit is effective in both killing and also driving them out of the cracks and crevices. Apply around baseboards, quarter rounds and especially where small openings are present around water pipes and other fittings. The area under the building should also be dusted with ten per cent DDT dust to prevent them from entering homes. A two per cent chlordane spray or five per cent chlordane dust may also be used in the same manner as DDT if desired. If scorpions are frequently seen in any outbuildings, the

same treatment is recommended. The treatment will remain effective over a period of six to eight weeks and if scorpions persist, should be repeated.

Remember that it takes three to four years for these scorpions to mature.

Therefore, if members of a household will every evening during the spring, summer, and fall months look for scorpions and kill them as they appear, the dwelling can finally be rid of these pests with the aid of a poisoning program.

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